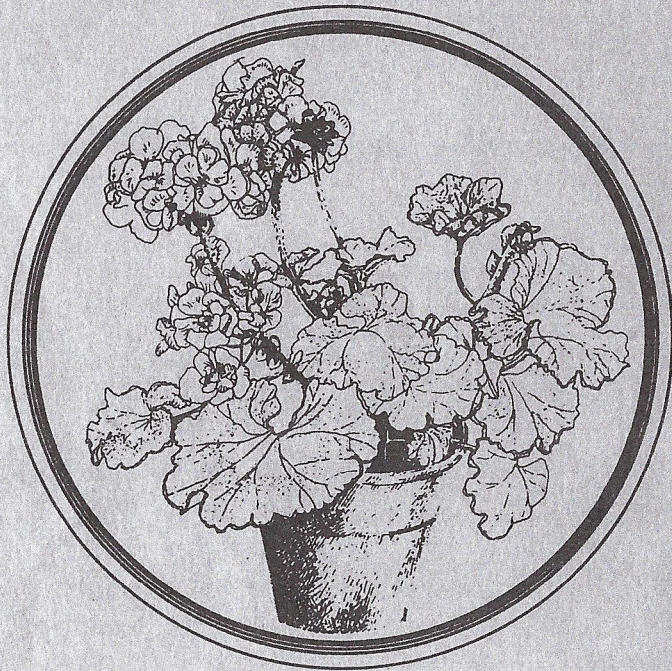


Copy for ACO Walks Committee

Victoria Park Promenade

GERANIUM WALK IX

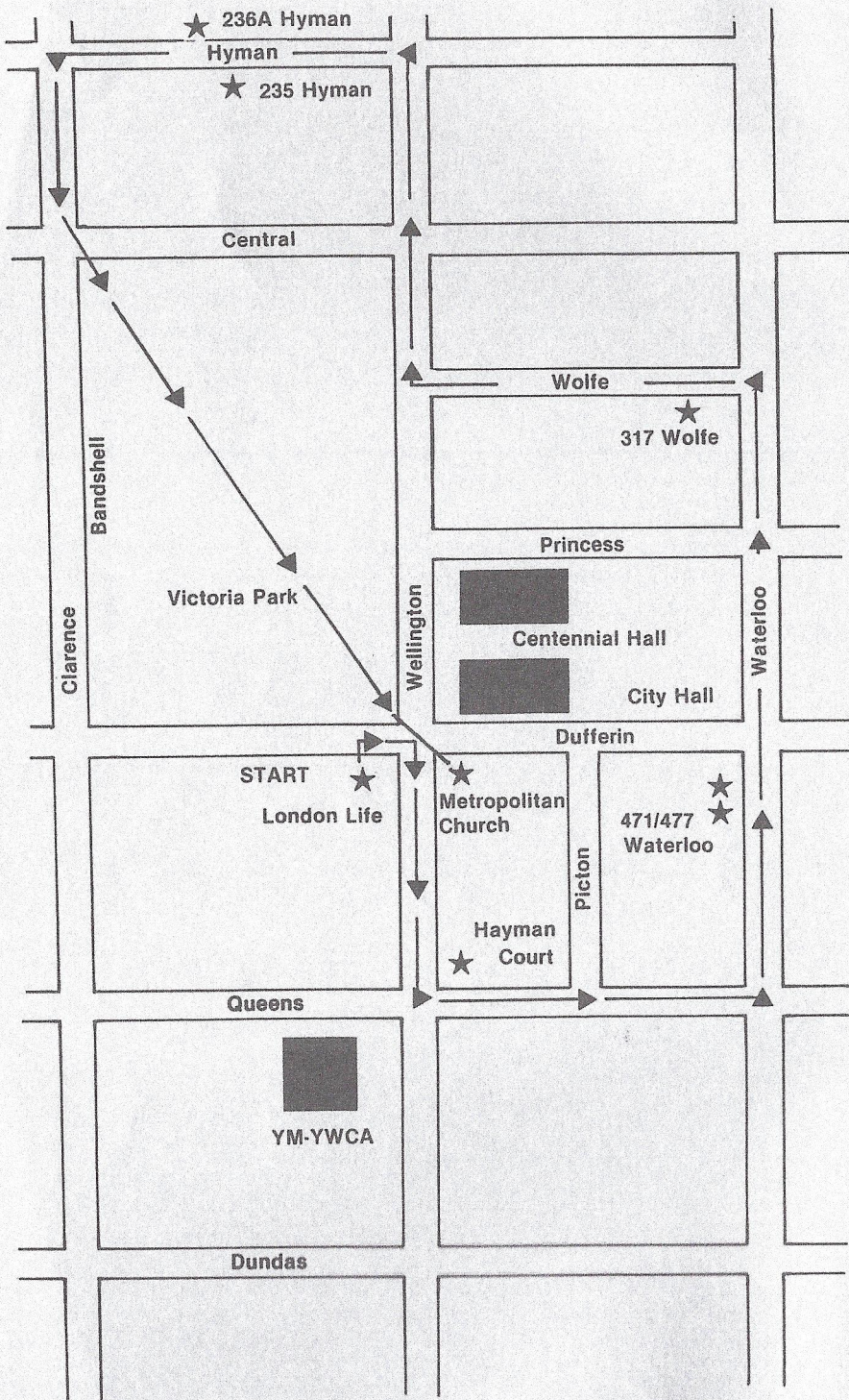


SUNDAY, JUNE 6, 1982

1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

— SPONSORED BY —

**The Architectural Conservancy
of Ontario
London Region Branch**



The London Life Insurance Company — Head Office Building

Steady growth of the London Life brought it from its founding in modest rented quarters on Market Lane in 1874 to a building purchased in 1906 still standing one block south on Wellington St. Later it was outgrown as well and land was assembled at Dufferin Ave. and Wellington St. on which sat mansions formerly occupied by Sir George Gibbons, William McDonough and Col. J. W. Little. These were demolished for the new building designed by John M. Moore and Co. of London. City Council objected to business use fronting on Victoria Park until the threat of losing the firm to Toronto or Hamilton and the handsome plans with landscaping brought them around. In 1928 Lt. Gov. W. D. Ross officially opened the building. The architecture is modified Greek with a portico of four columns over the front entrance and half columns between the windows using Indiana limestone. Queenston stone was used for the facing of the first floor, probably for some Canadian character. O. Roy Moore was supervisor and contractors were W. H. Yates Construction Co. of Hamilton. Expansions have occurred since then, in 1950 and 1965.

Interior trim is steel with a mahogany finish. Corridor floors of travertine show little sign of wear. Main floor wainscoting is white marble except for Steinway green in the lobby. The ceiling of the lobby is decorated with plaster ornaments of intricate design.

There are eleven St. Thomas Smith paintings throughout the building. The two in the main lobby are "Stormy Seas" and "Stormy Landscape".

Currently the whole building is being renovated by John E. Preston Design Group, consultants to the London Life Property Committee. The custom-made reception desk literally reflects the ceiling design using matched black marble. Mirror stainless steel at the base reflects the floor design.

Continue south on Wellington Street to the Hayman Court Apartments, 274 Queens Avenue.



The Hayman Court Apartments, 274 Queen's Ave.

Enter through the granite corner entrance at Queen's and Wellington. Proceed to the first door on the right, Apt. #30. The builder, John Hayman, emigrated from England to follow his brother who was stationed in London with the British military forces. A bricklayer by trade, John Hayman married a British girl and settled in London to raise a family of 7 or 8 boys and 2 girls. All entered the family firm which still retains his name. Probably the best known was George Hayman, who was Mayor of the city 50 years ago. Another son, William, an excellent draftsman, drew the plans for Hayman Court.

While building roundhouses for the Grand Trunk Railway in and around Detroit, John Hayman got the idea of building apartments here. Since business was slack, he set about building for himself amid doubtful comments about the earliest apartment buildings in the city. "People will never live in those boxes, John", they scoffed. This was midway in a ten-year span of building from 1908 to 1918 when Hayman Court was erected. The original occupants had some say in the interior layout. The core area location and comfortable convenience made them a success.

John Hayman would have been gratified to know that during a city tour in 1980, the American architectural authority, David Lewis, enthused that the apartments "should be preserved for their intimacy and complexity", and that he would "relish the commission to work on them himself."

The present residents of #30 have expressed their own individual style in combining old and new. Original stained-glass windows in the living room and kitchen are by local artist Ted Goodden.

We exit by the rear door. The hoists still in place by the wooden back porches were for baggage, not passengers. The lack of elevators and the huge expense of installing them was one reason the family sold Hayman Court to the London Life Insurance Co. in the early 1950s.

Until recent years the brick mansion and carriage house (formerly in spacious grounds), of Col. Walker, M.D. and M.P., remained tucked in behind Hayman Court. Here it was in 1874 that Lord and Lady Dufferin stayed when Victoria Park came into being.

Proceed 2 blocks east to 471 Waterloo Street.



471 Waterloo

471 Waterloo Street was built in 1909 for Robert D. McDonald, a prosperous cigar manufacturer, on the site of the former James Priddis home. The architect for this house was John M. Moore, London's leading architect of the time.

The design of this house is rich in both exterior and interior detail. Before entering this fine Edwardian building take a few moments to study the Neo-Classical pediment supported by paired, fluted columns supporting the roof of the porch. To the south you can see a Palladian window grouping giving an interesting variation to the roof line. The chimney details are also worth noting.

The wide entrance has wrought iron decoration on the sidelights and transom and beautiful bevelled and leaded glass decorating the inner door frame. There is a harmony of decorative detail throughout the interior of this gracious house starting with the dentil motif in the ceiling molding in the vestibule which continues as part of the door frame detail throughout the house. As you enter the large hallway note the decorative details of the fluted columns partially infilled with beading, the capital treatment of the columns, the ceiling moldings, and the bas-relief carving on the newel post of the wide stairway. The stair landing is dominated by a large bowed, coloured, textured and painted leaded glass window initialled KAD. The colours and detail of this beautiful window are worth a close study. At the top of the stairs note the dividing arch that features a helmeted head in each bracket. The fireplace in the room to your right as you reach the top of the stairs is of elegant white marble with brass fittings.

The attendant detail, the gracious expanse of doorways, the size of the rooms all add up to making this one of London's most gracious Edwardian houses.



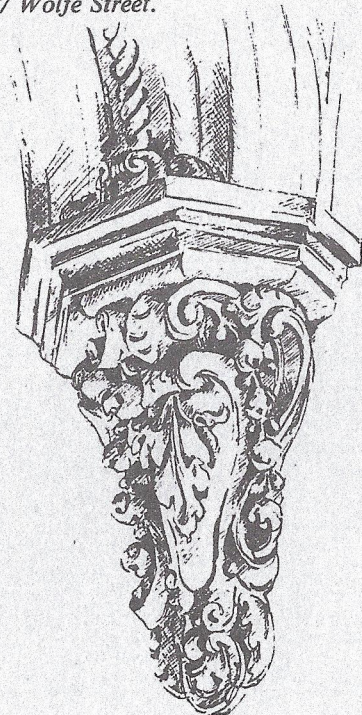


477 Waterloo Street — A Regency Style Cottage

On this walking tour we are asking you to enter this house via the walkway from 471 Waterloo. As you move along this walkway pause a moment to study the interesting exterior details of both buildings. Then proceed into 477 Waterloo. The height of the ceilings, the very deep, elaborate ceiling moldings, the medallion on each room ceiling and the very high baseboards all make this house worthy of your very close study. Each room features a very detailed ceiling medallion with a different motif. The hallway is divided by a bracked arch with the same helmeted heads as are found in the upstairs arch at 471 Waterloo. Proceed down the hallway towards the front door with its very lovely etched glass inner doors. On your right is a room with a wealth of decorative details starting with the filigree wrought iron ceiling molding, the ceiling medallion and the very elaborately decorated marble fireplace. The rooms on the south side of this house have been carefully restored by the Siskind, Cromarty law firm and are an excellent example of the past elegance of this Regency style cottage.

This house was built for Nathaniel Reid in 1876 and was later occupied by such prominent London families as the Carlings, Helen Gibbons, daughter of Sir George Gibbons and Mrs. Frank E. Leonard. When leaving this house pause for a moment at Dufferin and Waterloo to study both homes, as both are outstanding examples of London's early architecture.

Continue north to 317 Wolfe Street.



317 Wolfe St.

This Late Victorian buff brick house was built for William J. Legg c. 1900 in a more simple and restrained character than the Early and High Victorian buildings, and has changed very little since.

Its asymmetrical facade shows a strong vertical line in the tower and cut stone foundation. The extended verandah has classically-influenced columns, spindle balustrade, and a strict, geometric pattern in the porch gable. Decorative brick work accents the segmental-arched windows. Notice the generous double wooden front door with its stained-glass transom.

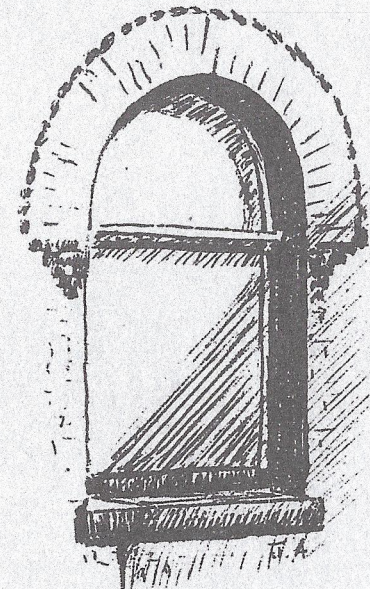
As we enter the charming hall, we can admire the formerly-painted pine floors, which were restored by the present owners. Eleven-foot-high ceilings and 13" baseboards contribute to the spacious effect. The living-room fireplace is painted pine with new slate tiles. Useful sliding doors connect most of the rooms. The lovely brass converted-gas fixtures have been collected by the present owners as typical of the period.

A large, sunny landing beckons upstairs, where good brass fixtures and four well-proportioned bedrooms can be seen. Stained glass panes above the front windows survive, and plain glass transoms above the hall doors for ventilation. Before going down the steep back stairs, notice the bathroom woodwork, which has all been stripped.

Please walk through the kitchen, and leave by the side garden.

This well-planned home continues to serve a busy young family with admirable efficiency and charm.

One block west to Wellington then proceed north to 235 Hyman Street.





235 Hyman St. Apt. 1

Built 1887 for F. J. Miller, a wig maker and the home of T. J. Murphy, a barrister, for many years in early twentieth century.

The original gracious doorway now has a carriage lamp and recent lancet iron railings at the second storey opening.

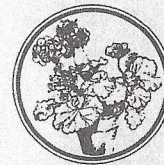
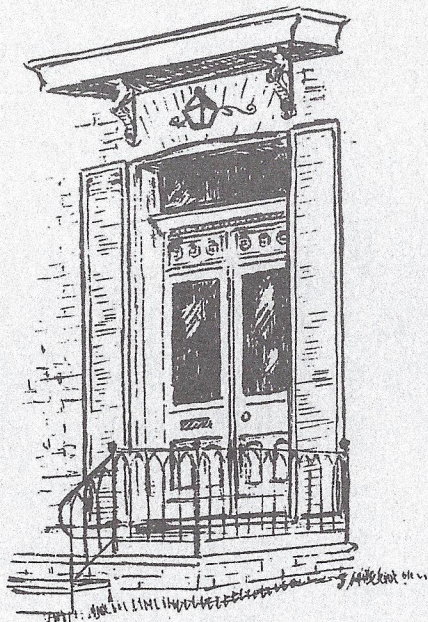
All elements of this building harmonize well, from the bay windows to the roof pediment, with neat brackets under the eaves. Notice the bricklayer's delight of small panels in zigzag projection.

Inside, note the contrast of the very dark woodwork and strong colours. Although difficult to see, the roundels above the door and stairway window display calla lilies as motif. The angles of the bay windows are repeated by the octagonal dining table. Observe the privacy achieved for the patio by the brick wall to the street, and shrubbery. Through the dining-room bay you can glimpse the stained-glass top of a bedroom window.

Rather unique are the roundels in the upper corners of door and window frames, of sunflower motif. Symbolic of constancy in love, the sunflower became popular from the Pre-Raphaelite English artists who influenced the William Morris Firm of designers also.

Early family photographs and charcoal portraits (on the left) are well displayed in the hall.

Proceed through kitchen to back door.



236A Hyman Street

On the north side of Hyman Street are two attractive, semi-detached houses numbered 236 and 236A. To describe them as double houses is to overlook one of their most interesting features: the building is not symmetrical. This is unusual in semi-detached houses and may be unique in London. Equally interesting is the fact that the facade is covered with 'apricot-red' bricks although the rest of the building is constructed of the same yellow bricks which were used in most other houses in the area. Yellow bricks are typical of those being produced in London in 1887 when this house was built for C. E. Pratt, a printer, who lived here for over 30 years. The red bricks probably came from either Hamilton or Milton.

Some details of the original architecture have apparently been lost. We may still note the slate-hung gable containing a three part Palladian window and the leaded glass windows on the first and second storeys.

Inside, all the original wood trim has been replaced. However, the contemporary mouldings harmonize with the original fireplace (the mantle is new), staircase (the rail is new) and the coloured glass window on the landing. Like the architecture, the furniture and accessories are a pleasing blend of old and new.

Buildings in the area bounded by Central Avenue, Waterloo Street, the C.P.R. tracks and Richmond Street date from 1886 when the Exhibition (Western Fair) Grounds were moved from this site to Queen's Park. In the following year several houses, including the two which are open to view to-day on Hyman Street, were built. The part of Central Avenue facing south into Victoria Park became a particularly prestigious address: there, large houses in a variety of architectural styles, were constructed for well known London families. #256 was built in 1888 for Charles H. Ivey, Barrister, and later owned by John S. Labatt, president and grandson of the founder of the brewery. Fortunately, most of this interesting and important streetscape has been preserved, with some recent changes in the facades of two or three houses.

The prestige associated with Victoria Park declined slowly. However, by the early 1970s the condition of several houses on Central Avenue and on Hyman Street, immediately to the north, had deteriorated; some had been converted into small apartments or rooming houses. At this time Alcor Investments Ltd. started to purchase properties on the block bounded by Central, Wellington, Hyman and Richmond and on the north side of Hyman. Their project, with the architectural firm of Tillman — Ruth, is known as Richmond Place. It involves the gradual renovation/restoration of houses and the construction of a new building fronting on Richmond Street. Conversion of older properties has produced 48 apartments and townhouses. The new building contains apartments above two floors of offices, plus townhouses in the section of the building which extends as infill between the houses on Central Avenue and Hyman Street.

In renovating the late nineteenth century houses, Alcor's philosophy has been to retain the authenticity of the facade and as many of the interior

architectural details (staircases, fireplaces, mouldings, stained glass windows, ceiling heights) as possible. At times the fenestration has been modified to admit more light. Where interior features could not be preserved they have been replaced by copies or contemporary details which blend with original forms. This philosophy of blending the new and the old has been carried over into the new building. It is only four storeys high, built of buff bricks to blend with the yellow bricks used in the older houses, and picks up Victorian elements of chimneys, bay windows, other arched window treatments, and pediment atop the front doors.

Regretably one more house on Central Avenue will have to be demolished to meet access requirements. A few details of the renovations (e.g. in the fenestration) may also meet with criticism. But we must remember that an alternative plan could have been to raze the block and erect two six-storey apartment blocks to achieve comparable density, had the property been in less sensitive hands.

Victoria Park

The site of Victoria Park was part of the Military Reserve lands set aside for the British garrison in 1839 as protection against border raids following the scare of the 1837 Rebellion. The troops were withdrawn in 1853 for service in the Crimea but returned from 1862 to 1868 because of tension caused by the American Civil War and the threat of Fenian Raids. The departure of the garrison in 1869 and the burning of the old barracks buildings in 1873 made it possible for the City to acquire the lands which were dedicated as a Park named in honour of the Queen by the Governor-General, Lord Dufferin, in 1874.

Plans for ornamentation were drawn up in 1878 by Wm Miller, head gardener at Fairmont Park in Philadelphia, and the following year the first ornamental fountain, designed by J. R. Peel, was dedicated. Initial plantings consisted of 331 trees and 72 shrubs, all surrounded by two rows of maple trees, and gravelled driveways and walks were laid out from the five entrances.

When walking through the Park, look for the original stone boundary markers; the captured Russian guns from the Crimea commemorating the sacrifices of the Welsh Fusiliers who had been garrisoned here; the Boer War monument by Montreal sculptor Geo. Hill; the Cenotaph modelled after the one in Whitehall in the other London; the Kiwanis Memorial Band Shell and the Sherman tank or "Holy Roller", sole survivor of the 1st Hussars' war-time engagements, both memorials to the servicemen of World War II.

Music in the Park provided by Central Secondary School Brass Ensemble.



Metropolitan United Church

In 1895 the cornerstone was laid for First Methodist Church, which replaced the burned Queen's Avenue Methodist, formerly Old North St. Church (1854) one block west. The congregation dated back to 1823 when London Township first became a Methodist Circuit. Their 1833 church had been an 18' by 24' rough-cast structure at newly-settled Ridout and Carling Streets.

The impressive style of this red brick church was derived from American H. H. Richardson Romanesque Revival, with typical 19th century Methodist central pulpit location. The circular portion behind the sanctuary, named Wesley Hall, began as one large room with class spaces at the back and a gallery above.

For less than \$50,000 the congregation could include three massive square towers commanding the best corner site, and steep gables between with corbelled projecting brick decoration. Excellent stained glass dates from the 1920s and 1930s after church union had brought about Metropolitan's present name.

In the 1920s major structural changes were made in Wesley Hall by Mr. G. Bridgman, architect and engineer and church member. After underpinning, the foundations were deepened 6' to make the present gymnasium. A steel frame just inside the walls was then erected from the basement to the roof, which it now supported. A fireproof steel and concrete floor was constructed giving the hall two levels.

The organ by Casavant Freres of St. Hyacinthe, Que., was installed in 1923 at a cost of \$40,000, and totally revised by them in 1980 with 4200 pipes and four manuals.

In the 1960s expansion was achieved by excavating under the main sanctuary, with underpinning, then great steel beams for pillars to support the gallery. A deeper basement provided a fine Christian Education Centre with lounge, classrooms and kitchen. In 1961 when Dr. George Goth was minister, the sanctuary was renovated with recessed organ pipes masked by the wooden screen which displays the massive cross. A lower choir loft, removal of gallery stairs, pews relocated for a centre aisle, and above all, the dark mahogany woodwork transformed to light limed tones all contribute to the beauty seen today.

The stained glass window above the balcony was made in 1964 by Christopher Wallis of London, and dedicated to the ministry of music in the church. A slide presentation shows the old sanctuary and the new.

Refreshments will be served at Metropolitan Church after 2:00 p.m. Organ recital between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.